

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of drilling a well bore in a subterranean formation comprising the steps of:

providing a drilling fluid comprising:

an aqueous-based fluid, and

a shale inhibiting component comprising a polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source, wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers; and placing the drilling fluid in the well bore in the subterranean formation.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the rubber latex comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the drilling fluid comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene, wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the shale inhibiting component is present in the drilling fluid in a concentration sufficient to inhibit the degradation of shale.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% by volume to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 400 nanometers.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the drilling fluid further comprises a salt.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the salt is present in the drilling fluid an amount in the range of from about 5 pounds per barrel to about the salt saturation limit of the drilling fluid.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the salt comprises at least one salt selected from the group consisting of potassium chloride, calcium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium formate, calcium chloride, calcium bromide, potassium carbonate, and any mixture thereof.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the drilling fluid further comprises at least one additive selected from the group consisting of an antifoam, a biocide, a bridging agent, a corrosion control agent, a dispersant, a flocculant, a fluid loss additive, a foamer, an H₂S scavenger, a lubricant, an oxygen scavenger, a scale inhibitor, a viscosifier, and a weighting agent.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the density of the drilling fluid is within the range of from about 7 pounds per gallon to about 22 pounds per gallon.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the aqueous-based fluid is fresh water.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the shale inhibiting component inhibits the degradation of shale by acting as a flocculant.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid; and wherein the drilling fluid further comprises potassium chloride in an amount in the range of from about 5 pounds per barrel to about the salt saturation limit of the drilling fluid.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of drilling a well bore in a subterranean formation comprising shale comprising the steps of:

providing a drilling fluid comprising an aqueous-based fluid, and a shale inhibiting component comprising a polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source, wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers; and

drilling the well bore in the subterranean formation using the drilling fluid.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the rubber latex comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the drilling fluid comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene, wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

24. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the shale inhibiting component is present in the drilling fluid in a concentration sufficient to inhibit the degradation of shale.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% by volume to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 400 nanometers.

28. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the shale inhibiting component inhibits the degradation of shale by acting as a flocculant.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) A method of enhancing the shale inhibition of an aqueous-based drilling fluid comprising the step of adding to the drilling fluid a shale inhibiting component comprising a polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source, wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% by volume to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid; and placing the drilling fluid in a well bore.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex.

34. (Original) The method of claim 33 wherein the rubber latex comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein the drilling fluid comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene, and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

36. (Original) The method of claim 30 wherein the shale inhibiting component is added to the drilling fluid in an amount sufficient to inhibit the degradation of shale.

37. (Canceled)

38. (Canceled)

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 400 nanometers.

40. (Original) The method of claim 30 wherein the shale inhibiting component inhibits the degradation of shale by acting as a flocculant.

41. (Currently Amended) A method of drilling a well bore in a subterranean formation comprising the step of using a drilling fluid that comprises a polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source, wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source inhibits the degradation of shale.

43. (Canceled).

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex.

45-55. (Canceled)

56. (Currently Amended) A drilling fluid comprising an aqueous-based fluid, a bridging agent, and a shale inhibiting component comprising a polyvinyl pyrrolidone

nanoparticle source, wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers, wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone, and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% by volume to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid.

57. (Canceled)

58. (Canceled)

59. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex.

60. (Original) The drilling fluid of claim 59 wherein the rubber latex comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene.

61. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein the drilling fluid comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene, and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone

62. (Original) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein the shale inhibiting component is present in the drilling fluid in a concentration sufficient to inhibit the degradation of shale.

63. (Canceled)

64. (Canceled)

65. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 400 nanometers.

66. (Original) The drilling fluid of claim 56 further comprising a salt.

67. (Original) The drilling fluid of claim 66 wherein the salt is present in an amount in the range of from about 5 pounds per barrel to about the salt saturation limit of the drilling fluid.

68. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 66 wherein the salt comprises at least one salt selected from the group consisting of potassium chloride, calcium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium formate, calcium chloride, calcium bromide, potassium carbonate, and any mixture thereof.

69. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 56 further comprising at least one additive selected from the group consisting of an antifoam, a biocide, a bridging agent, a corrosion control agent, a dispersant, a flocculant, a fluid loss additive, a foamer, an H₂S scavenger, a lubricant, an oxygen scavenger, a scale inhibitor, a viscosifier, and a weighting agent.

70. (Original) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein the density of the drilling fluid is within the range of from about 7 pounds per gallon to about 22 pounds per gallon.

71. (Original) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein the aqueous-based fluid is fresh water.

72. (Original) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein the shale inhibiting component inhibits the degradation of shale by acting as a flocculant.

73. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 56 wherein the drilling fluid further comprises potassium chloride in an amount in the range of from about 5 pounds per barrel to about the salt saturation limit of the drilling fluid.

74-81. (Canceled)

82. (Currently Amended) A drilling fluid for use in subterranean applications comprising a polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source comprises crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone and is present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% by volume to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid.

83. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 82 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticle source inhibits the degradation of shale.

84. (Canceled)

85. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 82 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex.

86. (Currently Amended) A method of drilling in a subterranean formation, comprising using a drilling fluid comprising an aqueous-based fluid and polyvinyl pyrrolidone

nanoparticles, wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles comprise nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers.

87. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex nanoparticles.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 87 wherein the rubber latex nanoparticles comprise emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene.

89. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86 wherein the drilling fluid comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene, and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles comprise crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

90. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles are present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% by volume to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid.

91. (Canceled)

92. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles have an average particle size of less than about 400 nanometers.

93. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles inhibit the degradation of shale by acting as a flocculant.

94. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles are present in the drilling fluid in an amount in the range of from about 0.0025% by volume to about 5% by volume of the drilling fluid; and wherein the drilling fluid further comprises potassium chloride in an amount in the range of from about 5 pounds per barrel to about the salt saturation limit of the drilling fluid.

95. (Currently Amended) A drilling fluid comprising an aqueous-based fluid, a weighting agent, and polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles, wherein at least a portion of the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles comprise nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 1,000 nanometers and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles comprise crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

96. (Canceled)

97. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the drilling fluid comprises rubber latex nanoparticles.

98. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 97 wherein the rubber latex nanoparticles comprise emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene.

99. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the drilling fluid comprises emulsion-polymerized copolymers of 1,3-butadiene and styrene, and wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles comprise crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone.

100. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles are present in the drilling fluid in a concentration sufficient to inhibit the degradation of shale.

101. (Canceled)

102. (Canceled)

103. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles comprise nanoparticles having an average particle size of less than about 400 nanometers.

104. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 further comprising a salt.

105. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 104 wherein the salt is present in an amount in the range of from about 5 pounds per barrel to about the salt saturation limit of the drilling fluid.

106. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 104 wherein the salt comprises at least one salt selected from the group consisting of potassium chloride, calcium chloride, sodium chloride, potassium formate, calcium chloride, calcium bromide, potassium carbonate, and any mixture thereof.

107. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 further comprising at least one additive selected from the group consisting of an antifoam, a biocide, a bridging agent, a corrosion control agent, a dispersant, a flocculant, a fluid loss additive, a foamer, an H₂S scavenger, a lubricant, an oxygen scavenger, a scale inhibitor, a viscosifier, and a weighting agent.

108. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the density of the drilling fluid is within the range of from about 7 pounds per gallon to about 22 pounds per gallon.

109. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the aqueous-based fluid is fresh water.

110. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the polyvinyl pyrrolidone nanoparticles inhibit the degradation of shale by acting as a flocculant.

111. (Previously Presented) The drilling fluid of claim 95 wherein the drilling fluid further comprises potassium chloride in an amount in the range of from about 5 pounds per barrel to about the salt saturation limit of the drilling fluid.